

Phalen Corridor Initiative Report: Summary of 1998 Neighborhood Visits

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Executive Summary

Phalen Corridor Initiative Report: Summary of 1998 Neighborhood Visits

Throughout a six-month period members of the Phalen Corridor Initiative Steering Committee took part in twenty-nine neighborhood visits to community groups throughout Saint Paul's East Side to assemble residents' opinions and concerns about the Phalen Corridor Initiative (PCI). Overall, more than 230 residents participated in these meetings producing 538 comments. Each comment was assigned to a specific discussion category and then reviewed to determine what East Siders think about PCI. The discussion categories are:

- The Boulevard: Comments distinctly related to the future Phalen Boulevard
- Commercial: Issues related to retail, small businesses, and restaurants
- The Corridor: Discussion points addressing the Phalen Corridor Initiative as a whole
- Employment: All issues that correspond to wages, jobs, and work opportunities
- Green Space and Environmental Issues: Comments associated with concerns for green areas, environmental issues and/or pollution
- Housing: Recommendations to help rebuild the quality of housing in the area
- Industry: Discussion points that mention the types of industry that should be sought
- Process: Issues that should be considered in the process of consulting the community
- Safety: Comments on how to insure safety in the development of PCI
- Training: Points made by neighbors which address preparation needed for East Siders to fill the jobs that will come as a result of PCI
- Transit: Comments related to travel by car, bus, or foot

It was assumed that community groups' priorities were demonstrated by how many comments they made per discussion category. Second, it was assumed that the notes were recorded well enough to reflect quotable references of community members' opinions.

Comments from the neighborhood meetings were compiled by district, including Districts 2, 4, and 5, and were allocated to the most appropriate discussion category. This method was used to determine which of the discussion categories had the largest number of comments, and were presumed to be of greatest importance to the district. With this information it was possible to create a priority list per district, and a priority list for the entire consulted area (Overall). The top three priorities per district and overall are:

District 2

1. Boulevard
2. Employment
3. Green Space

District 4

1. Housing
2. Corridor
3. Employment

District 5

1. Employment
2. Green Space
3. Boulevard

Overall

1. Employment
2. Corridor
3. Industry

Employment appears to be the most important issue to East Siders based on their responses at the neighborhood meetings. Notice that this category was among the top three in discussion categories of all districts. Some quotes from this category include:

- "[We need] larger light manufacturing sites. Workforce development is very important."
- "[The jobs need to include] full benefits and options for child care."
- "Based on our Hmong experience, electronic assembly and packaging are the two things that we don't have much trouble. So, we would like to have these two types [of jobs]."

Second would be the **Corridor** as it refers to the overall design of the East Side. Notable quotes on this category are as follows:

- "Industrial development design standards are important: It must look good, have landscaping, control internal traffic flow, be accessible, have windows, allow for pedestrian flow, etc."
- "What is happening with the berm?"
- "[There needs to be] more greening and planting of trees."

Third is **Industry**. Interestingly, this category did not come in the top three of any district individually, but cumulatively superceded some other discussion categories which may have seemed more important. Some good quotes from this category are:

- "Cannon Conveyer is a great example of a possibility of asset to community."
- "We need a good mix of production – high tech, engineering, assembly."
- "[We want] low pollution, light manufacturing companies."

Honorable mention needs to go to:

#4 Green Space and Environmental Issues which came in the top three of District 2 and District 5.

#5 Housing: Although this category had modest showings in District 2 and District 5, it's overall ranking is higher because this category was #1 for District 4.

#6 Boulevard which was in the top three of District 2 and District 5, but did not fair so well overall. Nevertheless, this is an important issue to consider in future planning.

These results may not seem so significant. One could easily say, "We already knew this!" Nevertheless, these data suggest a specific priority list describing how the community thinks PCI should proceed. This is extremely important as a process is sought that listens and responds to residents ideas and concerns. The Saint Paul Planning and Economic Development and the Saint Paul Port Authority will consider all of the opinions of East Side residents and it's advocates as they draft the **Development Strategy of the Phalen Corridor Initiative**. These residents provided a significant number of volunteer hours to produce these data, and demonstrated that they are both interested in PCI and sincerely want to be involved in its development.

Plans are in place to continue consulting with residents and community groups throughout the entire process of the Phalen Corridor Initiative, from beginning to end. Throughout the winter of 1998-99, community groups throughout the East Side will be asked to meet with PCI representatives to talk about the Development Strategy and express their opinions and suggestions for future redevelopment plans. This process assures that all involved are going to work together as a community and affirms that decisions will be developed in a cooperative manner.

Introduction

The following report summarizes the results of twenty-nine neighborhood visits (Appendix I) conducted from May to October of 1998 that served to introduce organized community groups on the East Side of St. Paul to the Phalen Corridor Initiative. Following each presentation was a question and answer session between the presenters and members of the community groups. The organized groups consisted of block clubs, church assemblies, groups representing specific minority populations, and other associated community groups. Overall, more than 230 community members, most of whom live on the East Side, were present at these 29 neighborhood meetings. Presenters for these visits were people distinctly knowledgeable regarding the Phalen Corridor Initiative (PCI), included PCI Steering Committee members, staff with the St. Paul Port Authority or Planning and Economic Development, Merrick Community Services staff, PCI staff, or other individuals actively involved in the development of PCI.

Each neighborhood visit included two presenters, the members of an individual community group, and often times a district council representative. (1) The presenters provided a brief summary of PCI to the group, played a video again summarizing PCI, and then asked the group a set of predetermined questions (Appendix II). The data for this report come from notes taken by the presenters during the question and answer sessions.

It is important to mention that this report only approximately represents the opinions of the community groups consulted and their respective communities. This is necessary to state because several inconsistencies occurred in the process of the investigation. (2) For example, notes taken from the neighborhood visits demonstrate that presenters complicated the investigation:

- They did not always ask the predetermined questions.
- At times, they altered the predetermined questions.
- They did not record the community groups' responses in a uniform manner.

This in no way reflects on the quality of the presenters, but more on the initial design of the investigation. The data represent a wide set of questions, some of which were predetermined and many others that are only inferred by the community responses. Furthermore, the recording method of community responses was well done for the most part. (3) Given all these considerations, it is still possible to use these data collected to approximately presume certain opinions in the four district areas consulted and for the East Side of St. Paul as a whole.

Assumptions

To make any of these presumptions, one needs to go out on a limb and make a few assumptions regarding these data. First and foremost is that the quantity of comments recorded per **discussion category** (listed below) represents the degree of community interesting. This means that it was assumed that community groups' priorities were demonstrated by how much the presenters wrote down per category. Second, the notes were recorded well enough to reflect quotable references of community members'

opinions. Errors in the quotes were either left as expressed in the notes or were corrected within brackets []. Finally, the comments are not necessarily mutually exclusive and can fall into more than one of the discussion category. Therefore, some residents' comments were copied to more than one category.

When one looks at the data, a number of themes emerged, which will be referred to as **discussion categories**. These categories represent the questions and responses provided by members of the community groups during the neighborhood meetings. The discussion categories are:

- The Boulevard: Comments distinctly related to the future Phalen Boulevard
- Commercial: Issues relating to retail, small businesses, and restaurants in the relevant area
- The Corridor: Discussion points addressing the Phalen Corridor Initiative as a whole
- Employment: All issues that correspond to wages, jobs, and work opportunities
- Green Space and Environmental Issues: Comments associated with concerns for green areas, environmental issues and/or pollution
- Housing: Recommendations for Phalen Corridor developers in the process of working to help residents rebuild the quality of housing in the area
- Industry: Discussion points that mention the types of industry that should be sought in the development of the PCI
- Process: Issues that PCI staff and others should consider in the process of consulting the community
- Safety: Comments on how to insure safety in the development of PCI, and how this might spill-over into neighboring communities
- Training: Points made by neighbors which address preparation needed for East Siders to fill the jobs that will come as a result of PCI
- Transit: Comments related to travel by car, bus, or foot

Method

Analysis of the data was conducted in the following manner: The notes taken by presenters per neighborhood meeting were first compiled by district, including Districts 1, 2, 4, and 5. Again per district, each comment was allocated to the most appropriate **discussion category**. This helped to determine which categories had the largest amount of comments. Those with the greatest number of comments were presumed to be of greatest priority to the district. [\(4\)](#)

This report consists of a priority list and summary per district, and a priority list and summary for the entire consulted area. Finally, is a summary of how this information may be used in the development of the **Phalen Corridor Initiative Development Strategy** being developed by the Saint Paul Port Authority and the Saint Paul Planning and Economic Development.

District 1 Summary

Community Group Consulted: Holy Apostle Episcopal

Date: June 24, 1998

Attendance: 6

Only one neighborhood visit occurred in District 1 (D1). This may have occurred because someone thought that the community group was within the borders of District 2. It is not possible to prioritize the comments according to the discussion categories since there were only a total of seven comments. Nevertheless, this group was aware of some of the issues regarding PCI, and expressed concern regarding planning and leadership of PCI as well as representation of minorities in leadership. Concerns over potential loss of housing units, consulting with "people of need," and the ever-present berm issue were also expressed.

District 2 Summary

Community Group Consulted: Phalen Village Business Association

Date: July 14, 1998

Attendance: (no notes)

Community Group Consulted: Hope Lutheran Church Seniors Group

Date: July 15, 1998

Attendance: 19

Community Group Consulted: Hazel Park Masonic Lodge

Date: August 18, 1998

Attendance: 8

Community Group Consulted: Wilson High Rise Residents' Council

Date: September 8, 1998

Attendance: (no notes)

Community Group Consulted: Iowa High Rise Residents' Council

Date: September 14, 1998

Attendance: (no notes)

Community Group Consulted: White Bear Avenue Business Association

Date: September 15, 1998

Attendance: 19

Community Group Consulted: Hazel Park Congregation (and Peace United – D4)

Date: September 23, 1998

Attendance: 8

Community Group Consulted: Parkway Hmong Parents Group
Date: October 15, 1998
Attendance: ?

Total Attendance: 54+

Priority: 1
Discussion Categories: Boulevard
No. of comments:21

Priority: 2
Discussion Categories: Employment
No. of comments:18

Priority: 3
Discussion Categories: Green space
No. of comments:14

Priority: 4
Discussion Categories: Industry
No. of comments:14

Priority: 5
Discussion Categories: Corridor
No. of comments:9

Priority: 6
Discussion Categories: Housing
No. of comments:8

Priority: 7
Discussion Categories: Process
No. of comments:7

Priority: 8
Discussion Categories: Training
No. of comments:6

Priority: 9
Discussion Categories: Commercial
No. of comments:5

Priority: 10
Discussion Categories: Transit
No. of comments:3

Priority: 11

Discussion Categories: Safety

No. of comments:0 (within others)

Summary of D2 Discussion Categories

Before beginning the summary of District 2 (D2), the reader should note that of the eight meetings held in this area, only five provided information for this section of the report.

As a result the count of comments is smaller than in the two following districts.

Furthermore, there are no attendance numbers for 4 of these meetings. It may be possible to assume that this is not such a critical issue since PCI may have more direct impact on District 4 and 5.

1. The Boulevard

We find that the D2 community members are critically interested in access to the future Phalen Boulevard which will end at Prosperity Avenue. Yet there also is a distinct concern in too much signage and billboards. So, some type of balance needs to be created as the access issue is developed. They also are distinctly interested in the appearance of the boulevard. Finally, there is a concern regarding safety as people are traveling to and on the boulevard. One can see these qualities and more through some of the quotes from the community meetings:

"[There should be] walking access."

"Access should be easy and obvious."

"[There should be a] low amount of signage."

"No damn billboards!"

"[Use a] railroad theme because it is an old railroad bed."

"Keep it in the hole. Residents don't want the road at grade."

2. Employment

Within all districts, the issue of employment was of major importance. Community members want area workers to find jobs that are entry level, full-time, well paying, and close to home.

"[We need] unskilled entry level jobs paying over \$8/hr, and on bus line."

"[There needs to be a] chance to grow – go up from entry level."

"Manufacturing is first choice."

"Based on our Hmong experience, electronic assembly and packaging are the two things that we don't have much trouble. So, we would like to have these two types [of jobs]."

3. Green space and environmental concerns

As would be expected, the residents of D2 show a great deal of interest in Ames Wetlands and the restoration of Ames Lake. Also present are concerns about the issue of access, but this time regarding the bike bath. In the development of the Corridor overall are comments about security and safety, pollution, and the attractiveness of the development.

"[We are] environmental conscious, [and want] no pollution-noise-traffic, etc."

"[We need] security in Hollow and the Corridor, especially on the bike path - right now."

"Need to make it easy to get off the bike path."

A great deal of detail will not be provided for the remaining categories of D2. Nevertheless, one should note that there is not a great deal of distinction many times between the discussions on environmental concerns and industry - the following category. Each of the following categories will be summarized with several quotes each.

4. Industry

"[We want] low pollution, light manufacturing companies."

[They showed interest in the bus barn, the jail, the brewery, and Williams Hill.]

Concern over zoning keeping companies out.

"Young companies are not being brought in."

"Develop Atlantic and 7th."

5. The Corridor

"Provide good lighting." [Safety]

"Achievement Plus should have assess either at Arcade or the Corridor, but keep traffic out of neighborhood.."

"[There needs to be] more greening and planting of trees."

6. Housing

"[We would] like to see aggressive housing rehab and improvement, and encourage more home ownership on the East Side."

"What about seniors living in Corridor? Hope this does not displace them."

"Does the Phalen Corridor Initiative have funds available to assist East Side to remodel our homes because some homes on the East Side are too old and need a lot of repairs."

7. Process/consultation

"Go to younger groups [too]."

"Work in conjunction with all groups: not a competition. Don't compete with Swede Hallow."

"Residents are Customers!"

8. Job training

[The Initiative needs to aid in the process of teaching English to area residents]

"We need training to help our people because training is very important for Hmong East Siders. These training only include machine shop, electronic assembly/maintenance that Phalen Corridor Initiative will bring to East Side."

9. Commercial

"Could get shops in the brewery like in Stillwater."

"For retail, encourage little shops that makes for busier shopping areas. We can't compete with the Maplewood mall if you put in big shops.)

10. Transit

Get traffic off [the residential] streets.

These concerns, criticisms, and helpful comments will be seriously considered in the process of developing the Phalen Corridor Initiative Development Strategy.

District 4 Summary

Community Group Consulted: Dayton's Bluff NHS

Date: July 27, 1998

Attendance: 10

Community Group Consulted: Upper Swede Hallow Neighborhood Association

Date: August 5, 1998

Attendance: 13

Community Group Consulted: East Side Seniors

Date: August 6, 1998

Attendance: 13

Community Group Consulted: Friends of Swede Hollow

Date: August 24, 1998

Attendance: 14

Community Group Consulted: 654 Block Club

Date: August 27, 1998

Attendance: 10

Community Group Consulted: Conway Block Club

Date: September 8, 1998

Attendance: 8

Community Group Consulted: Our Savior Lutheran & Bethlehem Lutheran

Date: September 9, 1998

Attendance: 19

Community Group Consulted: Ashbury United Methodist Church

Date: September 15, 1998

Attendance: 8

Community Group Consulted: Sacred Heart Catholic Church Outreach Commission

Date: September 30, 1998

Attendance: 13

Total Attendance: 108

Priority: 1

Discussion Categories: Housing

No. of comments: 41

Priority: 2

Discussion Categories: Corridor

No. of comments: 40

Priority: 3
Discussion Categories: Employment
No. of comments: 38

Priority: 4
Discussion Categories: Industry
No. of comments: 33

Priority: 5
Discussion Categories: Green Space
No. of comments: 24

Priority: 6
Discussion Categories: Boulevard
No. of comments: 15

Priority: 7
Discussion Categories: Transit
No. of comments: 14

Priority: 8
Discussion Categories: Process
No. of comments: 14

Priority: 9
Discussion Categories: Training
No. of comments: 11

Priority: 10
Discussion Categories: Commercial
No. of comments: 5

Priority: 11
Discussion Categories: Safety
No. of comments: 1

Summary of D4 Discussion Categories

1. Housing

This category raised more comments than any other in the four districts consulted. D4 community groups expressed that they are interested in the character of the neighborhood and that housing development needs to match the community's image of the area. This is done by monitoring how rehab money is defined and used as the redevelopment of the East Side proceeds, and how zoning is implemented and enforced. As in D2, a comment was offered expressing concern for senior housing in the development of PCI.

Surprisingly, comments also suggested that the emphasis on Historic Preservation classification in the area has always been positive for the neighborhood. Overall, there is not an overwhelming sense of confidence that PCI will have a positive impact on housing throughout D4. It is very important to emphasize this as PCI works with advocates and residents in this area. The following quotes provide some examples of the summary above:

Consider these quotes:

"Housing could be part of corridor development, [as in] Energy Park."

"[There is] more interest in homes and upkeep if they live and work in the community"

"Wells [Street would be] a good place for new and rehabbed housing."

"Housing rehab areas should be expanded from what's on the map."

"The Historic Preservation classification of the area is a hindrance to bringing in new development. It should not be done if it is cost prohibitive or if it prevents improving the housing stock."

"Many houses in the area are not up to code and nothing is done about it."

"Owner occupancy is not as important as simply seeing that the properties are kept up."

"Use the power, influence, enthusiasm and money that was used on Williams Hill on the housing issue."

"There is a complete lack of affordable housing for seniors. How can we help seniors stay in their homes, whether its helping with property taxes or house maintenance or whatever?"

2. The Corridor

It is interesting to notice how Small Area Plans serve as a reference for community group members in the process of talking about PCI. They are very interested to continue with the historic motif that is illustrated in the small area plans of Railroad Island and those of other East Side areas. The aesthetics and green spaces of PCI planning are critical to D4 citizens. Finally, they want assurances that buffer zones will sufficiently separate residential areas from the activity and noise of industrial and/or commercial areas.

Here are some quotes about the Corridor:

"The PCI Development Strategy should control billboards."

"Industrial development design standards are important: It must look good, have landscaping, control internal traffic flow, be accessible, have windows, allow for pedestrian flow, etc."

[There was a real concern that the area south of 7th Street E and between 4th and Johnson Pkwy is going to be left out of the PCI and not benefit from it.] "Don't pass us by."

"[Advocate for an] urban village concept."

3. Employment

A pattern is beginning to emerge regarding this category because it was in the top three of D2 and will see that it also is for District 5. D4 was interested to highlight that they need living-wage employment opportunities for those who are single parents, and/or may still be developing their communication skills in English, and/or have limited transportation options. As a result there is interest in jobs that are close to home, and those that provide permanent employment, day care, and benefits. In some cases white collar jobs may be preferable to those in light manufacturing. Nevertheless, the light industrial option does seem to remain as the preferred choice overall.

"[We need] larger light manufacturing sites. Workforce development is very important."

"[The jobs and businesses should be] single parent friendly."

"[There needs to be a] variety of levels for ability and [opportunities for] advancement."

"[Are there] any possibilities for office, white collar jobs?"

"[The jobs need to include] full benefits and options for child care."

As above, the remaining categories will only be summarized with quotes.

4. Industry

"Don't want polluting industries!"

"[The sites need to be] accessible and look good for curb appeal."

"It will be difficult to attract new industry unless we have large tracts of land."

"Not like Seeger Square. Don't detract from the neighborhood."

"Keep the jail and the bus barn at their current locations: Don't relocate to the East Side."

"Cannon Conveyer is a great example of a possibility of asset to community."

5. Green Space and Environmental Concerns

"Design recreational landscape [that is] connected to neighborhood."

"Rooftop gardens on 1 story industrial buildings

"Please make William's Hill and the Phalen Corridor attractive and part of the community with green spaces. Bring Trout Brook above ground. Create natural areas, trails and ponds.

"Swede Hollow Park [needs to be considered] untouchable."

6. The Boulevard

"Billboards along the corridor – [The] development strategy should limit this."

"How will people cross Phalen Blvd? It has to be pedestrian-friendly. People may want to walk to work and may need to cross the road."

"[We] like hills. Keep [the Boulevard] off Wells, keep in rail road track [bed]."

"Can the access to Globe be rearranged? The incline on 7th is tough on trucks."

7. Transit

"Need [to have] good access to Public transportation."

"Ensure [that] truck traffic does not short cut through neighborhood streets."

"There should be opportunities for people to walk to work."

8. Process/consultation

"Have PCI staff put together a summary of public comments."

"Follow community guidelines."

"Community councils should get copy of all notes comments from outreach meetings."

"Michael's Bar meeting wasn't a great meeting. [We] thought that homes were going to be destroyed the next day."

9. Training

"There must be training...for people as well as jobs creation."

"Provide day care and education, [like] noon hour classes."

"[Encourage] OJT."

10. Commercial

"[Develop a] commitment to retail on Payne, Arcade, and E. 7th, but not like Galteir [Plaza]."

"Mixed use – [There needs to be] support for small businesses [too]."

11. Safety

"It's dangerous to bike on the pathway and other places on the Eastside."

District 5 Summary

Community Group Consulted: Farnsworth Elementary School PTA

Date: May 7, 1998

Attendance: ?

Community Group Consulted: Ivy Mendota Block Club

Date: May 27, 1998

Attendance: 12 (no notes)

Community Group Consulted: Women's Association of Hmong and Lao

Date: July 7, 1998

Attendance: 9

Community Group Consulted: Railroad Island Weed and Seed

Date: June 11, 1998

Attendance: 16 (no notes)

Community Group Consulted: District 67 DFL Club

Date: August 11, 1998

Attendance: 10

Community Group Consulted: Rail Road Island Implementation Task Force

Date: August 13, 1998

Attendance: 12

Community Group Consulted: Holy Trinity Church

Date: August 18, 1998

Attendance: 6

Community Group Consulted: ECON Weed and Seed Steering Committee

Date: August 19 1998

Attendance: ?

Community Group Consulted: Case Arcade Block Club

Date: August 20, 1998

Attendance: 6

Community Group Consulted: Polish American Club

Date: September 2, 1998

Attendance: 13

Community Group Consulted: Arlington Hills Presbyterian

Date: September 17, 1998

Attendance: 13

Total Attendance: 97+

Priority: 1

Discussion Categories: Employment

No. of comments: 34

Priority: 2

Discussion Categories: Green space

No. of comments: 24

Priority: 3

Discussion Categories: Boulevard

No. of comments: 23

Priority: 4

Discussion Categories: Corridor

No. of comments: 22

Priority: 5
Discussion Categories: EIndustry
No. of comments: 18

Priority: 6
Discussion Categories: Training
No. of comments: 17

Priority: 7
Discussion Categories: Process
No. of comments: 16

Priority: 8
Discussion Categories: Housing
No. of comments: 12

Priority: 9
Discussion Categories: Transit
No. of comments: 12

Priority: 10
Discussion Categories: Safety
No. of comments: 6

Priority: 11
Discussion Categories: Commercial
No. of comments: 6

Summary of D5 Discussion Categories

1. Employment

It is obvious by far that the most popular issue resulting from the discussions with community groups in District 5 (D5) was employment. A great deal of interest is present to return to the "good old days" when almost everyone on the East Side had a good living-wage job with Strohs, Whirlpool, 3M and other large manufacturers in the area. They want jobs that are close to home for East Siders. They want jobs that pay well, provide benefits, are permanent, and are accessible to individuals with challenges (inexperience, single parent needs), or have high level skills. Given the growing number of immigrants moving to the area, there is a sincere interest in developing jobs that do not initially require complete fluency in English.

Some important quotes include:

"We need jobs that people can do without a log of English skills."

"Bring back the types of jobs people lost!"

"Covenants hiring East Siders is key!"

"Not everyone has cars."

"[This needs to be] geared to the people that live here."

2. Green Space and Environmental Issues

It is interesting that D5 rated this categories above others - even more important than D4 rated it! The D5 groups are interested in being involved not only in the planning, but in the implementation of green spaces by providing students and other volunteers with opportunities to create green spaces. They also are protective of their bike path, and hope to enhance it with added security (i.e., call phones).

[They are interested in staying informed about the project including service opportunities for their students, e.g., wetland plantings, clean-ups, and environmental studies of Phalen Lake watershed - environmental stewardship.]
(Farnsworth Elementary)

"Make sure there is grass, trees, room for birds; not so much concrete. Should look 'posh and polished.'"

"Swede Hollow should stay a passive park."

[They like the idea of parkland south of Wells.]

"[There is a] lack of access to parkland. [We] need improved access to parkland and the trails system."

3. Boulevard

It seems only natural that this category would appear in the top three priorities given that most of the Boulevard is within the borders of D5. Community groups had a number of technical interests and concerns about the Boulevard, and appear to be well informed on this issues. They are interested in connection with other corridor developments in the St. Paul. While they claimed that they do not want the boulevard to become a "freeway to downtown," community members strongly advocated for having the road 4 lanes the entire length. To do otherwise was assessed as being shortsighted. And as in the other districts, they are interested in having reasonable weight and speed limits.

"Don't let the road become a divider. Encourage pedestrian crossing"

"[You] need to address all issues of the 35E realignment [and the] Phalen Corridor connection at 35E and the East Central Business District bypass."

"Why the hell would you even think of having 2 lanes? Stay with 4 lanes the whole way. Don't be short sighted!"

"[We] don't want it to be a freeway to go downtown." [Ghost of 212]

"Save room for LTR."

The remaining categories, while also important will be summarized by several comments/quotes.

4. Corridor

"We need physical boundaries between residential and industrial areas: streets of green buffers."

[Safety is a big concern. They wanted to know the road's speed limit.]

"We need security – brightness. How about a call phone?"

"What is happening with the berm?"

"We like the small town feel and rolling topography of the area."

5. Industry

"We need a good mix of production – high tech, engineering, assembly."

"No pollution generating businesses"

"Organizations that are civic minded."

6. Training

"We need job training on the East Side. People do need training or experience to get jobs. Training about job environment, soft skills, as well as job specific training and OJT. [and] Job specific ESL."

"Must have childcare."

"Job mentoring to keep a job is needed."

"Focus on students."

While the following issues did not rank very highly, it is worth noting that they were generated by the community groups and not by the predetermined questions.

7. Process

"Ask kids about their design ideas. Involve them in the planning."

[Another big concern was communicating with people when their houses are taken, so that they do not perceive relocation as eviction. Communication should be person-to-person, maybe have one Hmong family talk with other Hmong families in the area.]

"Give tours of PCI to the community: industrial sites, mostly FYI, heavy vs. light industry."

"Work in conjunction with all groups. [This is] not a competition."

8. Housing

"Those houses taken need to be replaced with good looking structures."

"We need more than just jobs to maintain our neighborhood with quality of life."

9. Transit

"Needs good walking and biking access as well as auto access for workers."

[They said travel is a problem.] "The #14 bus is always packed. There are a lot of people without cars on the East Side."

10. Safety

"Why talk about jobs creation when the neighborhood is unstable and unsafe that people don't want to stay in?"

"[We need] security in the Hollow and Corridor, especially on the bike path, right now."

11. Commercial

"Some commercial restaurants are going to have to be moved in. Walking distance [from the] corridor for food is key."

Summary for All Consulted Areas

When the counts from all of the comments are calculated, there is a shift in which categories are considered most important. It is important to note that the results of D4 influence this study foremost because more neighborhood meetings were held in this area resulting in more comments (Total=236). Therefore, when the numbers of comments for a category were calculated, D4 results were able to inflate the importance in comparison

to the opinions in other districts (See Appendix III). The results of D5 were next in weight (Total=190), followed by D2 (Total=105).

Comment Count Total for All Districts

1. **Employment:** 90
2. **Corridor:** 71
3. **Industry:** 65
4. **Green Space:** 62
5. **Housing:** 61
6. **Boulevard:** 59
7. **Process:** 37
8. **Training:** 34
9. **Transit:** 29
10. **Commercial:** 16
11. **Safety:** 7
- District 1:** 7
- Total:** 538

Employment can be inferred to be the most important issue to East Siders based on the quantity of comments they provided the neighborhood meetings. This category was among the top three discussion categories of all districts.

- "[We need] larger light manufacturing sites. Workforce development is very important."
- "[The jobs need to include] full benefits and options for child care."
- "Based on our Hmong experience, electronic assembly and packaging are the two things that we don't have much trouble. So, we would like to have these two types [of jobs]."

Second would be the **Corridor** – only in the top three of D4. This result shows how the outcomes may be favoring this district.

- "Industrial development design standards are important: It must look good, have landscaping, control internal traffic flow, be accessible, have windows, allow for pedestrian flow, etc."
- "What is happening with the berm?"
- "[There needs to be] more greening and planting of trees."

Third is **Industry**. Interestingly, this category did not come in the top three of any district individually, but was always very close, and cumulatively has superceded some other discussion categories which may have seemed more important.

- "Cannon Conveyer is a great example of a possibility of asset to community."
- "We need a good mix of production – high tech, engineering, assembly."
- "[We want] low pollution, light manufacturing companies."

Honorable mention goes to:

#4 Green Space and Environmental Issues which came in the top three of D2 and D5. Results demonstrated that there are possibly four categories more important than this one to D4 residents.

#5 Housing: Although this category had modest showings in D2 and D5, it's overall ranking is higher because this category was #1 for D4.

#6 Boulevard which was in the top three of D2 and D5, but didn't fair so well overall, possibly because D4 groups did not prioritize this category in their comments.

It is also interesting that two of D4's top three made it to the overall top three (Corridor and Employment), while D2 and D5 only had Employment in the their own and the overall top three.

Implications for the Development Strategy

As the Development Strategy (Strategy) is drafted, it may be critical for the document to reflect the top three discussion categories:

- Employment: All issues that correspond to wages, jobs, and work opportunities
- The Corridor: Discussion points addressing the Phalen Corridor Initiative as a whole
- Industry: Discussion points that mention the types of industry that should be sought in the development of the PCI

It is also important to seriously consider the three runner-up categories:

- Housing: Recommendations for Phalen Corridor developers in the process of working to help residents rebuild the quality of housing in the area
- Green Space: Issues associated with concerns for green areas, environmental issues and/or pollution
- The Boulevard: Comments distinctly related to the future Phalen Boulevard

Effort has been made to provide details for each of these categories by including quotes from community group representatives. These reference may be used in the process of drafting planning documents for PCI. There are a few more specific details that should be repeated. A lot of concern was expressed regarding safety on the existing and future bike trail, and in the Corridor's development overall. Safety is an issue that can be addressed as reinvestment occurs. This could be dealt with through lighting and other design issues. All districts mentioned the berm, and were curious what would be done with it. Finally, there is an interest in dealing with the employment and housing opportunities for single parents. These parents and their children will mold the future of this community. It is the intent of PCI to help facilitate their success.

These results may not seem so significant. One could easily say, "We already knew this!" Nevertheless, these data suggest a specific priority list describing how the community thinks that PCI planners should proceed. This is extremely important as a process is sought that listens and responds to community members' ideas. The Saint Paul Planning and Economic Development and the Saint Paul Port Authority will consider all of the opinions of East Side residents and it's advocates as they draft the preliminary **Development Strategy of the Phalen Corridor Initiative**. These residents provided a significant number of volunteer hours to produce these data, and demonstrated that they are both interested in PCI and sincerely want to be involved in its development. This presents an opportunity to show that PCI in fact does value what residents have expressed!

Next Step

29 groups including over 230 individuals from the area have been consulted to produce the information in this report. The draft of this document was completed in November 1998 and presented for information to the PCI Steering Committee on January 5, 1999, and then mailed to all groups consulted on January 12, 1999. The involved groups received this document for two reasons - to both provide the groups an opportunity to correct or complement what was presented in the report, and also to demonstrate to these groups that PCI genuinely is interested in moving forward as a cooperative process. The Sacred Heart Catholic Church Outreach Commission requested to have two comments added to this report:

1. There is no alternative (not a house), affordable housing for seniors in District 4.
2. Most senior buildings in the area were built in the 1950's and do not have garages.

The closing date for complementing this report was February 12, 1999. Additional neighborhood meetings have been held since the completion of this report and will continue to occur as PCI works on informing and consulting with East Side community members.

One fact that the groups above have clearly communicated is that they want to remain involved. Plans are in place to continue PCI development in concert with residents and community groups throughout the entire process of the Phalen Corridor Initiative, from beginning to end. In the Spring of 1999, community groups, including those involved with this study, will be asked to meet with PCI representatives to review the first public draft of the Development Strategy and express their opinions and suggestions for future redevelopment plans for Saint Paul's East side.

Appendices

Appendix I

Timeline of Neighborhood Meetings

No.: 1

District: D5

Neighborhood Group: Farnsworth Elementary School PTA

Date: May 7, 1998

Attendance: ?

No.: 2

District: D5

Neighborhood Group: Ivy Mendota Block Club

Date: May 27, 1998

Attendance: 12 no notes

No.: 3

District: D5

Neighborhood Group: Railroad Island Weed and Seed

Date: June 11, 1998

Attendance: ? no notes

No.: 4

District: D1

Neighborhood Group: Holy Apostle Episcopal

Date: June 24, 1998

Attendance: 6

No.: 5

District: D5

Neighborhood Group: Women's Association of Hmong and Lao

Date: July 7, 1998

Attendance: 9

No.: 6

District: D2

Neighborhood Group: Phalen Village Business Association

Date: July 14, 1998

Attendance: ? no notes

No.: 7

District: D2

Neighborhood Group: Hope Lutheran Church Seniors Group

Date: July 15, 1998

Attendance: 19

No.: 8

District: D4

Neighborhood Group: Dayton's Bluff NHS

Date: July 27, 1998

Attendance: 10

No.: 9

District: D4

Neighborhood Group: Upper Swede Hallow Neighborhood Association

Date: August 5, 1998

Attendance: 13

No.: 10

District: D4

Neighborhood Group: East Side Seniors

Date: August 6, 1998

Attendance: 13

No.: 11

District: D5

Neighborhood Group: District 67 DFL Club

Date: August 11, 1998

Attendance: 10

No.: 12

District: D5

Neighborhood Group: Rail Road Island Implementation Task Force

Date: August 13, 1998

Attendance: 12

No.: 13

District: D2

Neighborhood Group: Hazel Park Masonic Lodge

Date: August 18, 1998

Attendance: 8

No.: 14

District: D5

Neighborhood Group: Holy Trinity Church

Date: August 18, 1998

Attendance: 6

No.: 15

District: D5

Neighborhood Group: ECON Weed and Seed Steering Committee

Date: August 19, 1998

Attendance: ?

No.: 16

District: D5

Neighborhood Group: Case Arcade Block Club

Date: August 20, 1998

Attendance: 6

No.: 17

District: D4

Neighborhood Group: Friends of Swede Hallow

Date: August 24, 1998

Attendance: 14

No.: 18

District: D4

Neighborhood Group: 654 Block Club

Date: August 27, 1998

Attendance: 10

No.: 19

District: D5

Neighborhood Group: Polish American Club

Date: September 2, 1998

Attendance: 13

No.: 20

District: D2

Neighborhood Group: Wilson High Rise Residents' Council

Date: September 8, 1998

Attendance: ? no notes

No.: 21

District: D4

Neighborhood Group: Conway Block Club

Date: September 8, 1998

Attendance: 8

No.: 22

District: D4

Neighborhood Group: Our Savior Lutheran & Bethlehem Lutheran

Date: September 9, 1998

Attendance: 19

No.: 23

District: D2

Neighborhood Group: Iowa High Rise Residents' Council

Date: September 14, 1998

Attendance: ? no notes

No.: 24

District: D2

Neighborhood Group: White Bear Avenue Business Association

Date: September 15, 1998

Attendance: 19

No.: 25

District: D4

Neighborhood Group: Ashbury United Methodist Church

Date: September 15, 1998

Attendance: 8

No.: 26

District: D5

Neighborhood Group: Arlington Hills Presbyterian

Date: September 17, 1998

Attendance: 13

No.: 27

District: D4

Neighborhood Group: Sacred Heart Catholic Church Outreach Comm.

Date: September 30, 1998

Attendance: 13

No.: 28

District: D2

Neighborhood Group: Hazel Park Congregation (and Peace United – D4)

Date: September 23, 1998

Attendance: 8

No.: 29

District: D2

Neighborhood Group: Parkway Hmong Parents Group

Date: October 15, 1998

Attendance: ?

Total Attendance: 230+

Appendix II

Community Outreach Questions

1. What kind of jobs do you think people on the East Side need?
2. What types of industry provide the jobs that East Siders need?
3. How important is it to you and your neighbors to have jobs close to home?
4. Do we need job training on the East Side and what kind?
5. How can we make these industrial sites into assets to the neighborhood?
6. What kind of opportunities do you see in how buffer zones (edges) are designed?
7. What connection would you like to see from your neighborhood to the road, i.e., landscaping, pedestrian connections, bike paths, etc?
8. What are some of the things you like about your neighborhood that you would like to see in how the Phalen Corridor eventually is designed?

Appendix III

Comment Counts

District 2

1. **Boulevard:** 21
2. **Employment:** 18
3. **Green space:** 14
4. **Industry:** 14
5. **Corridor:** 9
6. **Housing:** 8
7. **Process:** 7
8. **Training:** 6
9. **Commercial:** 5
10. **Transit:** 3
11. **Safety:** 0
- Total:** 105

District 4

1. **Housing:** 41
2. **Corridor:** 40
3. **Employment:** 38
4. **Industry:** 33
5. **Green Space:** 24
6. **Boulevard:** 15
7. **Transit:** 14
8. **Process:** 14
9. **Training:** 11
10. **Commercial:** 5
11. **Safety:** 1
- Total:** 236

District 5

1. **Employment:** 34
2. **Green space:** 24
3. **Boulevard:** 23
4. **Corridor:** 22
5. **Industry:** 18
6. **Training:** 17
7. **Process:** 16
8. **Housing:** 12
9. **Transit:** 12
10. **Safety:** 6
11. **Commercial:** 6
- Total:** 190

East Side

1. **Employment:** 90
2. **Corridor:** 71
3. **Industry:** 65
4. **Green Space:** 62
5. **Housing:** 61
6. **Boulevard:** 59
7. **Process:** 37
8. **Training:** 34
9. **Transit:** 29
10. **Commercial:** 16
11. **Safety:** 7
- District 1:** 7
- Total:** 538

Notes

1. There was one case when two church groups met with the presenters – District 2: Hazel Park Congregation and District 4: Peace United Church.
2. The author of this report did not design this investigation.
3. No notes were taken at five of the twenty-nine meetings. See Appendix I.
4. This process was not used for District 1 since only one neighborhood visit was held in this area.

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